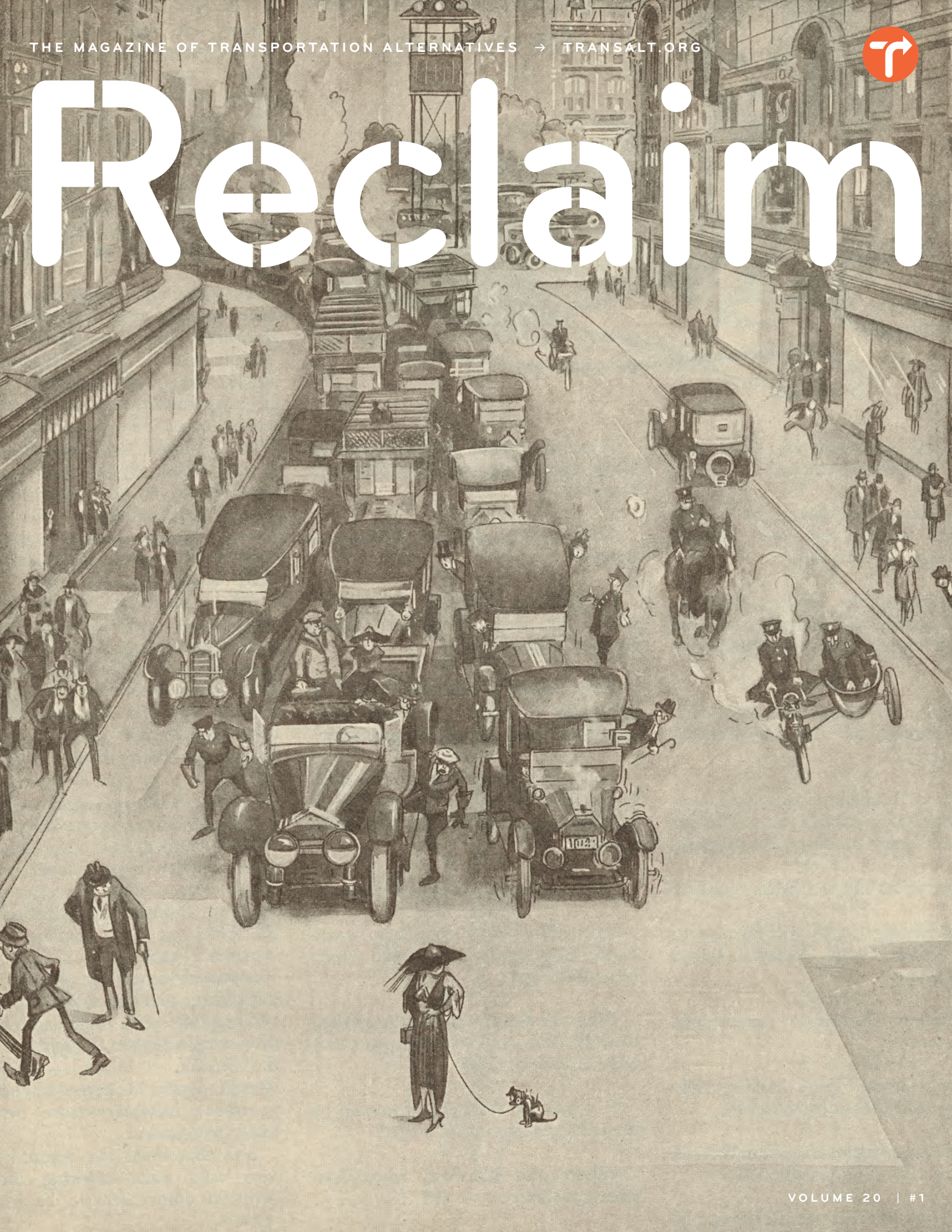




Reclaim



PUBLISHER'S LETTER

His Honor, My Neighbor



MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO (AT RIGHT) AFTER A ROUSING GAME OF STOOPBALL

BEFORE BILL DE BLASIO WAS THE 109th Mayor of New York City, he was the tall dude who lived down the street from me.

A decade ago, my wife and I rented an apartment near his now-famous Park Slope home. That house on 11th Street has served as a counterpoint to Mayor Bloomberg's mansions, and a backdrop to countless snow shoveling photographs and a symbol of anything and everything a fine home on an average Brooklyn street can be made to signify by a press

corps eager for inspiration. Back then, though, there weren't a lot of conclusions to draw.

He was just a guy who lived on my street with a wife and two kids. Over the years, I got to know him in the way every New Yorker gets to know her neighbors; through a series of nods and tiny encounters that leave a little mark and eventually add up to a portrait. We've all got hundreds of them: the dog lady, the smiling guy, Hassan, Julia, Big Gary from the deli. It just so happens that the tall dude

from down the street recently moved to Gracie Mansion, so let me tell you about my sense of him as a neighbor.

He knows how to play stoopball. I know because he taught me. I was new to the neighborhood, and brought a shiny, bouncy, pink spaldeen to our local block party, along with a rudimentary knowledge of the legendary street game that was played all over the city until the car took over. I was goofing around with a few local kids, bouncing the spaldeen off the best stoop on our block, when Bill walked over and boomed, "Stoopball!"

Then, it was on. After a quick tutorial, Bill started throwing heat. Two or three tosses in, he landed a pointer (where the ball catches a corner of the stoop) that shot up over his head and into the hands of a kid who proudly stepped up to take his turn. Bill laughed a big belly laugh, shouted a few words of encouragement, and then, to the cheers of an amassed crowd, loped back to the middle of the street to take his turn in the field.

That wasn't the first time I played in the street with Bill. Back when I was a T.A. volunteer and he was a brand new Council member, there was a Halloween protest for a car-free Prospect Park. The idea was simple: a bunch of us would dress up as vampires, mummies, Franksteins and enormous SUVs, then we'd run around and try to scare folks out of the park. Amazingly, people, including our new Council member, showed up in support (and also, probably, to laugh at us, and maybe because it was a beautiful Saturday). Bill addressed the crowd. He spoke in favor of a car-free Prospect Park and then took some time to shake hands and get to know the strange cast of wig-wearing, face-painted, fanged ghouls who'd put together such a ridiculous event.

Truth be told, my mental portrait of Bill is mostly made of more mundane stuff: working out at the YMCA, waiting for a chair at the barber shop, eating slices of pizza with a fork and just walking around the neighborhood. He was always



talking to people, always smiling, always hunching down to listen and nod, even if he didn't always agree.

I know that because Bill and I haven't always seen eye to eye. In the heat of the mayoral campaign, he was asked about his position on bike lanes and other livable streets improvements, and he equivocated. He said that he would rather take a more "incremental" approach than Mayor Bloomberg. A lot of advocates, myself included, heard that as a shot across the bow, so I reached out to him. First, I sent him an email expressing my displeasure, then I called his office and left a message that was, well, heated.

I explained to him that there should be nothing incremental about saving lives. I emphasized the fact that bike lanes and pedestrian refuges were wildly popular. I—OK, I'll be honest—I yelled and screamed about how wrong he was. And to my surprise, he actually called me back.

He calmly explained that he was talking about the significance of community input and insisted his position was better than some of the other candidates.

I replied that I was holding him to a

higher standard because "The Bill de Blasio I know is better than that."

And he is. And he's proved it. And he's made street safety a top priority.

So far the Bill de Blasio who lives in Gracie Mansion is every bit of the man who was my neighbor. He's been fighting for a better city and listening to his neighbors, and he's been busy and smiling and eating pizza with a fork.

I'm thankful for all of that. And I'm thankful that when we don't agree—because just like neighbors, advocates and the powers that be don't always get along—he'll still listen. Maybe he won't call me back—he has a lot on his plate—but if he's half as good a mayor as he was a neighbor, I know he'll take the time to hear everyone—kids in the street, activists in vampire costumes, screaming critics, and even the idealists who know they're right.

Sincerely,

Paul Steely White
Executive Director

Our mission is to reclaim New York City's streets from the automobile, and to advocate for bicycling, walking and public transit as the best transportation alternatives.

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Reclaim

Vol. 20 No. 1 of 3

ISSN #1524-1912

Published quarterly by Transportation Alternatives. Subscriptions available for \$40/year, \$50 (outside U.S.). Reprints (except graphics), with T.A. credit, allowed without permission.

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BIKE NEWS

Milestones



Linh H Nguyen



CITI BIKE WEATHERS THE WINTER

Despite a better-than-expected start to the City's bike share program, plenty of naysayers were certain that a harsh winter would put a crimp in Citi Bike's popularity. Now, with one of the nastiest cold snaps in recent memory behind us, it's safe to say that Citi Bike riders soldiered on, and New York City's pedal-powered public transit option is here to stay. On average, 9,256 trips per day were taken from December 21 to February 16, racking up an average daily total of 13,871 miles. On February 13, when a nor'easter piled up 10 inches of snow, Citi Bikers still managed 909 rides, adding up to nearly 5,600 miles. And on January 3, when temperatures reached only 18 degrees, there were 1,230 Citi Bike rides taken, traveling a total of 1,919 miles. Next year, Old Man Winter might want to sign up for an annual membership.



ANOTHER GREAT BIKE SUMMIT

The League of American Bicyclists held its National Bike Summit in Washington, D.C. in early March. Thousands of cycling advocates and activists from around the world gathered to discuss issues that are near and dear to Transportation Alternatives. They also heard from a handful of our favorite people, including T.A. Board Member Susi Wunsch and longtime supporters Laura Solis, Nona Varnado, Rich Conroy, Aaron Naparstek, Doug Gordon, Clarence Eckerson and many, many more. Between our staff, our friends and all we've accomplished this year (including an award for Best Advocacy Campaign), T.A. was well represented and represented well.

Andrew Hinderaker



MORE GREENWAY!

The Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway will get a few miles closer to completion this construction season, with a significant improvement planned for Williamsburg Street West, along the Brooklyn Navy Yard, as well as a new segment along Van Brunt Street in Red Hook. The 14-mile car-free route hugging Brooklyn's waterfront, from Sunset Park to Greenpoint, started as a grassroots, volunteer-led effort. With the support of local elected officials, government agencies and advocacy groups like T.A., it became an official New York City capital project. That's the kind of success story we can really get behind.



NYC DOT

RIDING IN RIDGEWOOD

The City will stripe a slew of new bike lanes in the Queens neighborhoods of Ridgewood and Glendale this summer, which will tie into popular routes that cross through Astoria and Bushwick as well as car-free recreation paths around Forest Park and the Ridgewood Reservoir. The lanes will be built along Himrod and Harman streets, from Evergreen to Metropolitan avenues, and along Onderdonk and Woodward avenues, as well as portions of Catalpa and 69th avenues, from Flushing to Cooper avenues. These lanes are not only a boon for area cyclists, but also a big boost to the overall connectivity of the City's bike network.



COMMUTER PROFILE

Bettie Kollock-Wallace



Andrew Hinderaker

Age? 75

Occupation? I'm the chairperson of Brooklyn Community Board 16, which represents Ocean Hill and Brownsville, and a personal trainer and group fitness coordinator. Before that, until 2004, I was the principal of M.S. 267 [in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn].

How did you get involved in the fight for more livable streets? Going back many years, I've been active in my community. Before I was a principal, I was a math teacher and a community advocate and a youth group leader. I was introduced to the Community Board in the 1980s by someone who is long gone now. I first served on the Land Use Committee, and I've stayed very active because I'm committed to helping people.

What's your proudest achievement in your time on the Community Board? The new bike lanes in Brownsville. I like

to exercise, and I like to see people be fit and have wellbeing in their lives. The new bike lanes help make that possible. There's something for each of us, those who want to ride or walk or just get to the recreation center. The lanes help. If you're active physically, you can keep the mind sharp.

How did you start riding a bike?

How? I bought one and got on—a 10-speed with curved handle bars. Now I have too many bikes—a cruiser, a mountain bike, I have them all. I tell people that it's for the physical wellness of my body. Plus, some people have more than one car, so why can't I have more than one bike?

Do you ride every day? I ride my bike most days but not with the weather we had this winter. There's a group of us in Brownsville who ride together most Saturday mornings. We start at about 6 o'clock because the traffic is light. We'll

ride around the neighborhood or maybe to Prospect Park. If any of your readers are interested in joining us, they can contact the Brownsville Recreation Center and ask to be put in touch with me.

In the years you've been riding, have you noticed more bikers? Or better behavior from drivers? I've definitely seen more bikes over the years, and the new bike lanes are really encouraging people in this neighborhood to give cycling a try. As far as motorists go, I don't think the respect is there as much as it should be. The streets need to be shared. Like in any community, we want the same respect here. It's a matter of learning a new way.

Do you think the City could make cycling better in Brownsville?

I'd like to see the City work harder to implement the rules about double-parking in the bike lanes. And speeding. I'd like to see more speed enforcement, especially on wide streets with bike lanes. And just like there are speed signs, I want to see bike signs that tell drivers to watch for bikes and to respect bikers. The DOT and police should help us create an atmosphere of respect. I'm sure everyone has a child, a grandchild, a great-grandchild that they want to be safe when they're walking or biking.

Do you have any advice for people who want to make streets in their neighborhood better?

The real question is: Are you satisfied with the conditions in your community? If the answer is not a resounding yes, ask what you can do to make it better. Don't depend on others. Don't depend on me. Depend on yourself. Get up and do something and stop complaining. I don't sit down and twiddle my thumbs, and I don't spend my precious time with people who do. Attend meetings. Speak up. Greet your neighbors and your postal workers and your trash collectors. You can make your neighborhood better every day. ■

BIKE NEWS

A Chorus of Calls for a Safer Queens Boulevard

THOUGH QUEENS COUNTY'S 2.2 million residents speak 138 different languages, not one of them needs a translation for "Boulevard of Death."

One look at the 12-lane arterial street that bears the borough's name and it's obvious why Queens Boulevard has earned such a menacing moniker.

It's fitting too, that in the most diverse county in America, a broad coalition of community groups, faith-based organizations, small businesses, elected officials and neighborhood activists are banding together to see if Queens Boulevard can't receive the kind of Complete Street overhaul that has saved lives, shortened commute times and boosted local economies on other major thoroughfares around the city.

"This is our neighborhood. It is our responsibility to make it safer and greater today than it was yesterday," said A. Redd Sevilla, the Executive Director of New Life Fellowship Community Development Corporation, which is one of more

than 100 local organizations that has signed on to Transportation Alternatives' Zero on Queens Boulevard Campaign.

"Reinvestment is part of the mission of New Life CDC," Sevilla added. "Reinvestment is about developing leaders who create and shape a more beautiful local neighborhood instead of moving out to find one. The success of the Zero on Queens Boulevard Campaign hinges on local stakeholders who believe in this type of reinvestment. That is why New Life CDC is behind this effort."

Also backing the push for a safer Queens Boulevard is City Council Member Karen Koslowitz. She has taken the lead on pursuing Complete Street redesign on Queens Boulevard, submitting a formal request to DOT Commissioner Trottenburg and Queens DOT Commissioner Hall for a meeting focusing on the community's demand for a feasibility study. After gathering support and signatures from all of the Council Members whose districts are located along the

Boulevard, Koslowitz is ushering into being a new, supportive group of key decision-makers in Queens.

Transportation Alternatives' Queens Activist Committee is also deeply involved in the effort. The campaign has been a longstanding priority for T.A.'s committed activists. Since 2013, they've collected thousands of petition signatures and organized the participation of hundreds of local businesses. On April 9, members of the Activist Committee will present to Queens Community Board 6 in Kew Gardens.

"I think they're positioned to make a powerful pitch to the community as they request a resolution for a Complete Street feasibility study of Queens Boulevard," said Celia Castellan, T.A.'s Campaigns and Organizing Assistant. "This is a grassroots effort that has found real and substantial support up and down one of the most complicated, crowded and contested streets in New York City." ■



A PEDESTRIAN DASHES ACROSS SIX LANES OF QUEENS BOULEVARD TRAFFIC.

Dmitry Gudkov

AMY COHEN AND GARY ECKSTEIN ADDRESSING REPORTERS AT THE FAMILIES FOR SAFE STREETS LAUNCH.



MEMBER PROFILE

Amy Cohen and Gary Eckstein

How long have you been T.A. members? About 20 years.

Why did you join?

Gary: I was a bike commuter and supportive of the efforts to improve conditions in the city.

Amy: Gary was the one who was involved, but neither of us were active like we are now. Gary rode in the NYC Century Bike Tour 10 or 12 times. He and Sammy finished the entire 100-mile route this past fall.

About a month later, on October 8th of last year, your son Sammy was hit and killed by a van on your street. Has that changed your relationship to T.A.?

Amy: After Sammy was killed, we got involved in a different way. We felt the need to become a voice supporting street safety beyond just cycling. We wanted to support Vision Zero. Before that we were dues-paying members, but we didn't do much.

Gary: We wrote letters and supported the Prospect Park West bike lane. Sammy and I went to a bike share planning meeting together, but it's different now.

You also started a group called Families for Safe Streets. Can you talk a bit about that?

Amy: I got an idea for a group to advocate for safe streets—a group of all the families who've been through what we have. I asked Caroline [Samponaro, T.A.'s Senior Director of Campaigns and Organizing] to help me put together a meeting. It was going to be a half-day meeting where we'd get to know one another and see if we could work together. I brought in someone to facilitate discussion and by the meeting's end we'd decided...

Gary: We'd decided unanimously...

Amy: To move forward as a group and to testify at the Vision Zero hearing.

Your efforts have made a real impression on the media, and it seems like there's a lot of momentum behind your cause right now. What do you attribute that to?

Amy: We're very pleased that the Administration was so outspoken on traffic safety even before Sammy was killed, and I think there is a lot more to come. As for why, well, I think we give a face to

the statistics. This is what it looks like when a person is killed every 30 hours on New York City's streets. They're not just numbers when you put a human face on them.

How do you plan to keep up the pressure?

Amy: We're going to continue to watchdog.

Gary: It's all about showing up at hearings and meetings and building coalitions. We invite people to join us and speak out...

Amy: To travel to Albany for lobbying days, because the change won't happen without Albany.

Is there anything you'd like to say to T.A.'s 100,000 supporters?

Amy: We've been touched by the outpouring of support. Every time there has been a need, friends and supporters and advocates have shown up in huge numbers—even on short notice—and supported us and supported the fight for safer streets in New York. ■

Why I ride:

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so my kids will see a view like this

because my actions matter

I love my planet



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DOT COMMISSIONER
POLLY TROTTEMBERG
AT THE VISION ZERO
LAUNCH EVENT

THE SIT DOWN

DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg

First off: Congratulations Commissioner Trottenberg. What was it like to get the call from the Mayor's team? How did that process unfold?

Thank you. It was a thrill and an honor. The process happened quite quickly. Certainly it was a job I was interested in, and I was lucky enough to have some great supporters, the folks from the advocate community among them. And I knew First Deputy [Tony] Shorris from the Port Authority, and I was lucky enough to know my three predecessors in this job, Janette, Iris and Lee Sander, so I got to meet with Tony a few days before Inauguration Day, then spoke with the Mayor shortly after. And my appointment was announced on New Year's Eve. It really was a whirlwind couple of weeks.

It seems like you've hit the ground running. Obviously, the Vision Zero announcement presents an enormous task for your agency. Has that been exciting? Overwhelming at times?

We've had a couple things going on. A new administration starting up, particularly after 12 years of the old one. A lot of new personalities, a lot of people learning the ropes. And, yes, the Vision Zero announcement. I wasn't even officially the Commissioner when I stood with the Mayor and Commissioner Bratton for the announcement that we'd produce a report in one month. Two weeks later, I was up here, and the team was already working on the Vision Zero report. We've all been very excited. It's going to be one

of the signature priorities not just for NYC DOT but, I think, for the whole de Blasio Administration.

On top of that, we've had a little snow; seven storms, nearly five feet of snow, and that has been a baptism by fire in terms of operational challenges. Certainly, Sanitation takes the lead, but DOT's crews help with snow removal, keeping the bridges and bike lanes safe, and then all the pothole work that follows a winter like this. And I have to say, the men and women who do all of that work have been amazing. They are a dedicated group of public servants, and this has been a hard winter for them, so I want to thank them, and I hope all New Yorkers will do the same when they have a chance.

One of the things we hear from Visions Zero naysayers is ‘Where will the money come from?’ What’s your response?

I’ve been hearing that as well, and it’s a fair concern. People are looking to us to provide more detail on exactly what the dollars are going to look like and where they’ll come from. And I’d say to them, look, we got the report out in a month. That’s pretty quick. Some of the Commissioners for our partner agencies are still just arriving. And as I said at the Vision Zero hearing, the Mayor has asked all of us involved to take a look at what we’re doing and to see where we can step it up with additional resources, and then have a discussion about what additional resources are needed. We’ll be putting out more detail on that as the budget process unfolds. It’s a complicated process. City Hall has reassured us that if more resources are needed, they’re going to be there.

You went to college in the city, at Barnard. Where you interested in transportation and planning then?

I really was, actually. I grew up in Pelham, in Westchester, just north of New York, but then lived for a time in Boston, and started to get interested in subways and trains at an early age. When I went to Barnard, it was the darker days. The subway was in disrepair, there was a lot of crime and graffiti, a lot of breakdowns. It was wonderful to see what happened between when I went to college in New York in the 1980s and what started to happen in the 1990s when I worked for the Port Authority: the renaissance that happened. The subways drove that renaissance. Both improving the infrastructure and what Commissioner Bratton did, first when he was Transit Chief and then as Police Commissioner with the “Broken Windows” approach and really tackling disorder and that leading to

dramatic improvements in street safety and crime reduction in New York. One thing it really drives home for me is that improvements in transportation are key parts of a city’s success.

Speaking of Broken Windows, there has been a big push from T.A. recently, as well as from the City and the DOT, to improve data analysis, particularly around traffic safety. Will that continue to be an important task for DOT in the coming years?

Yes. Absolutely. I think NYC DOT has become an increasingly data-driven agency. We have some of the nation’s—if not the world’s—best transportation engineers and people who really crunch the data, but that doesn’t mean we can’t do better. One of the issues that has come up since the Vision Zero rollout is working with the NYPD and the Department of Health to make sure our data is harmonized. We need a consistent methodology in tracking crashes in terms of location, characterizing what happened and documenting the extent of injury. That’s an issue we’ve made progress on, but more needs to be done.

Is what is happening right now on New York City’s streets shaping what’s happening in the rest of the country?

Yes. It will in the future, and it already is. I can tell you from my time at U.S. DOT that seeing what cities like New York, Chicago and D.C. are doing on street redesign, transportation safety, Complete Streets and bicycling has caught the eyes of federal policy makers. When I was at U.S. DOT, I did everything I could to support those efforts. It is absolutely true that when you travel the country, activist groups like T.A. are where the excitement and the political energy is. Why, on the national level, wouldn’t we want to pay attention to the most energized part of the transportation stakeholder community?

Mayor de Blasio has promised to raise cycling rates to six percent of total mode share. That’s a big number. What can we expect from the DOT to make that number a reality?

In this area, we’re continuing the good work that was done under the last Administration. We’re in the process of looking at a number of bike projects, and we’re already working with community groups. We’re going to continue to build out the bike network, and we’re going to continue to focus on safety. T.A. says this all the time, and it’s true. There is safety in numbers. It’s a virtuous cycle. As you build out more bike lanes and as more people ride and feel safe, the balance on the streets starts to shift and that induces new people to get in the mix, and it makes drivers more aware. We’re going to make a strong push there. The Mayor has tasked us with making big improvements and big increases.

CITY HALL HAS REASSURED US THAT IF MORE RESOURCES ARE NEEDED, THEY’RE GOING TO BE THERE.

What about the other signature projects from the last administration—like Select Bus Service and pedestrian plazas—will the agency continue to push for those in significant ways?

Yes. As you know, the Mayor committed to building out 20 Select Bus Service routes. We are hard at work on that. I won’t kid you, there are some big chal-

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lenges there—budgetary challenges, political challenges, working on the ground with communities, a close partnership with the MTA—but that is high on our list of priorities and one that the Mayor is going to follow through on.

As for the plaza program, we're going to continue that. Plazas enhance safety. They've been a popular amenity around the city. And I think we're excited now to see that increasingly the plaza program is spreading out all over the city. In all the boroughs now, there is a big interest in these programs. We're working with local groups on the ground to make sure these are supported in the community and that they can continue to be operated well in terms of maintenance and programming, so that they really work for the community.

You served in Washington during one of the most dysfunctional Congresses in history, yet you advanced a very progressive agenda at the U.S. DOT, supporting biking, Complete Streets and better transit. What lessons from that experience are you bringing to New York to work with entrenched interests and the notoriously dysfunctional legislature in Albany?

I think the lessons are obvious ones, but they're worth repeating. Leadership matters. From President Obama to the two Secretaries I served under, Ray La Hood and Anthony Fox, they understood that modern transportation is a diverse, multimodal system involving Complete Streets built for all users. That kind of leadership is very important. And we have that in Mayor de Blasio. Clearly, he is someone who gets it. He's made Vision Zero such a high priority, when there are a lot of other things on his plate. I'm inspired by that.



The other thing is strong, capable partners. Advocates, transportation officials, that's another piece of the puzzle. We're clearly going to have that in New York City and in our work up in Albany. We have advocacy groups with a long history of accomplishments in Albany. We do have speed cameras; we do have red light cameras. There's a track record of success. We certainly have groups who can mobilize. And clearly, the families who have lost loved ones have organized into a coalition that is very powerful. That's going to be a strong political force. It's Politics 101, but I feel like we have some of the elements here.

You stayed at the Vision Zero hearing after you testified—which is something few commissioners do—to hear the families of crash victims testify. You also spoke with families on Inauguration Day. That sent a strong message to a lot of people. Can you elaborate on what that means to you?

When you're at the local level, as I am, even in a big city like New York, you are really close to the ground in terms of being with the people who are affected by what you do. There's nothing more powerful and emotional than hearing from these families. They are a powerful force. I always want to take the time to hear those stories because it's a powerful reminder that we really need to succeed. They're counting on us. And we're counting on them too. We need their help.

What do you think Transportation Alternatives should focus on in the coming months and years?

I wouldn't deign to tell T.A. what they should do. You guys are pros. You know what to do. DOT needs your help as we go around the city talking to folks and educating and, at times, persuading people. We're going to look to you to be our partners in our efforts up in Albany. I know you'll be great partners. We'll probably all go to Washington sometime too.

Is there something that makes transportation in New York different than anywhere else in the world?

Yes, well, certainly different than anywhere in the country. With U.S. DOT, I traveled to many countries and many cities, and there's something about New York that's unique. No city has a mass transportation system like New York: the density, the pedestrian population and the sheer volume of people. It's a joke I used to have in Washington: the best people in transportation come from New York because they have seen it all—a world-class transit system, an amazing network of bridges and roadways, extraordinary infrastructure, a thriving pedestrian culture and now a cycling culture. It opens your eyes to the real richness of what you can do in transportation. ■

JOY RIDERS AND JAY WALKERS

REINVENTING STREETS FOR THE MOTORING AGE

By Peter Norton

The story goes something like this: Americans prefer to drive. Of course, they got around in other ways before the automobile, but when they could afford a car they bought one. Once most American families had a car, cities had to be rebuilt. Such progress came at a price, but it was a price Americans willingly paid. The car gave its owners freedom of mobility; it let them live in a green suburb but work in the city. It gave them weekends in the country. The car held particular attractions for Americans, who've had a century-long love affair with them. Today, we live in a nation rebuilt for cars because most Americans wanted them.

We grow up with versions of this story, but it's an invention. That's not to say that it's all wrong—it's not. It's about half right. But because the omissions are selective, they distort. The story is called “the American love affair with the automobile.” The metaphor is so common that Google autocompletes “American love affair w” with it, above all alternatives. The expression seems to be a naturally evolved figure of speech that grew unaided from the fertile soil of conventional wisdom.

In fact, the expression was introduced to millions all at once, on the evening of October 22, 1961. Hosting an episode of NBC's Sunday program *DuPont Show of the Week*, Groucho Marx explained to television viewers that the history of the automobile in America was the history of a “burning love affair”—a “romance” between American men and “the new girl in town.” The episode was called “Merrily We Roll Along.” *DuPont*, which owned a 23 percent share in General Motors, promoted this “affectionate report” as “the story of America's love affair with the automobile.” The expression endured.

In Groucho's story, as in many others like it, the ubiquity of the automobile was the consequence of a consumer preference in a free economy. In 1961, the automobile was enduring intense criticism for ravaging American cities, for killing tens of thousands of Americans a year and for contributing to smog and roadside blight. The story defended the automobile not so much by denying these costs as by justifying them.

But those who look before “Merrily We Roll Along,” in the historical record the 1910s and 1920s have left to us, will find a different story, especially in cities. Archives, newspapers and contemporary photographs tell us that when automobiles began appearing in streets in the first two decades of the century, there was no love lost between them and typical city people. It was not love at first, second or third sight.

Streets at the beginning of the twentieth century were public spaces. They were not the special province of any single class of street user. No lines marked the pavements, no traffic signs or signals regulated vehicles. While pedestrians preferred sidewalks, they strode freely into the street wherever they pleased. Indeed, street design practically invited pedestrians to enter them anywhere. The tracks of street railways followed the centerlines of streets. Passengers boarded and alighted along these tracks in the middle of the street, crossing to and from the sidewalk directly. Cyclists, pushcart vendors, and children used streets freely. When police tried to limit street play, many parents objected. In 1915, New York City police tried arresting “small boys who have recklessly defied the perils of crowded thoroughfares,” but they soon desisted because “it frightened and shamed the child and angered his parents and guardians.”

Motorists were expected to conform to the street as it was. Above all, this meant driving slowly. Speed limits in cities averaged about 10 mph; often drivers were expected to slow down even more at intersections. Speed limits were very difficult to enforce, but there were other ways to slow cars down. In the 1910s, for example, most cities installed posts called “silent policemen” in the centers of intersections. Motorists turning left were expected to keep the post to their left as they turned. The maneuver required a very small turning radius—small enough to compel the car to slow down nearly to a stop. The regulation favored pedestrians; when cars turned on a large radius they approached nervous street-crossers from behind. Silent policemen helped preserve the street for pedestrians at the expense of motorists. They were a visible sign that streets were not really for cars; cars could use them if they behaved like the slower vehicles that preceded them.

Hence physical infrastructure—such as streetcar landings and silent policemen—reinforced the status quo. But mental infrastructure was even more hostile to cars. By prevailing norms, the car, used as intended, was a misuser of streets. Car crashes made these norms plainly visible. Given the complex mix of street uses of a century ago, it is no surprise that cars were often involved in crashes. What's more surprising is the allocation of blame. By far the most common serious crash was a motor vehicle striking a pedestrian. No matter where the pedestrian was, however, the driver was almost automatically blamed. Pedestrians ridiculed fast drivers as "joy riders." If such a driver struck a pedestrian and was apprehended, jurors were quick to condemn him. "Juries in accident cases involving a motorist and a pedestrian almost invariably give the pedestrian the benefit of the doubt," a safety expert explained in 1923. Newspapers joined in the blaming; motorized grim reapers rivaled Uncle Sams in their frequency in editorial cartoons. Letters to the editor pages were crowded with vilifications of motorists for menacing pedestrians; few rose to drivers' defense.

The most poignant signs of such routine blaming of motorists were found in the traffic safety campaigns that swept American cities in the late teens and into the middle 1920s. As the motor vehicles proliferated, so did traffic casualties. Between 1920 and 1928, the traffic death toll doubled to about 26,000 a year. In cities, most of the fatalities—often three fourths of them—were pedestrians. And among the pedestrians, about half were children and teenagers. The most visible response was "No Accident Weeks" and similar safety campaigns. Though modeled on the industrial safety movement of the 1910s, such campaigns took on a character of their own. City people, furious at automobiles and terrified for children's safety, demonized cars. In safety parades, floats featured flatbed trailers bearing wrecked automobiles with a devil at the wheel. Many cities dedicated memorials to child crash victims. Though temporary mock-ups, these monuments were made to imitate war memorials and were dedicated in large, elaborate and solemn ceremonies. The memorials exonerated children and their parents; they were the innocent victims and were regarded as public losses. The blame lay with automobiles and their drivers.

People interested in a future for cars in cities—especially local auto clubs, but also auto dealers, taxi companies and others with an interest in motor vehicles—perceived a threat. As long as crashes remained frequent and drivers bore the blame for practically all pedestrian casualties, such organizations could not improve the car's image. In an effort to prevent crashes, these groups joined in the public safety campaigns of the 1910s and early 1920s—urging motorists to drive with caution, and urging greater caution among pedestrians. But such efforts could not legitimize motorists' claim to the street. The more visionary among the car's advocates agreed with Charles M. Hayes, president of the Chicago Motor Club. To fend off "unbearable restrictions," Hayes said, people would have to learn that "the streets are made for vehicles to run upon." This was a radical proposal in 1920.

To shift blame from motorists to pedestrians, such groups sometimes tried embarrassing pedestrians who crossed the street however they pleased. In such efforts, a term of ridicule was needed. Between 1909 and 1911, the term jay walker—an insult comparing free-roaming pedestrians to boorish fools—began to reach print. In the succeeding years, jay walker became a tool in an effort to redefine streets. It implied a new answer to the question "What is a street for?"—an answer that packed a sting. Auto clubs and dealers promoted the term. In 1912, Kansas City, Missouri, approved an ordinance banning "jay walking." The rule seems not to have been a great success; pedestrians insisted on their rights. An observer noted that "pedestrians, many of them women" demanded "that police stand aside;" in one case "women used their parasols on the policemen." Elsewhere ridicule alone was tried. In December 1913, in Syracuse, New York, a department store Santa Claus used a megaphone to call out "jay walkers." But the technique was very controversial. Jaywalker's successful entry into the English language did not come easily. In a 1915 editorial, the *New York Times* denounced "jay walker" as "highly opprobrious" and "a truly shocking name." Any attempt to arrest pedestrians would be "silly and intolerable."

STREETS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY WERE PUBLIC SPACES. THEY WERE NOT THE SPECIAL PROVINCE OF ANY SINGLE CLASS OF STREET USER.

But auto clubs, dealers, and other local interest groups continued to promote the epithet. In at least a few cities from 1920 to 1922, Boy Scouts were recruited to hand out cards to pedestrians who crossed as they pleased. There was no official penalty, but the cards sternly warned pedestrians against "jay walking," and they defined the term—indicating that it was still little known. In Michigan, the *Grand Rapids Herald* reported that through such a campaign, "thousands of people who never knew what jaywalking meant have learned the meaning of the word." Some pedestrians were offended; a New Yorker objected to the distribution of such "rebuke cards." In other cities, jaywalking was ridiculed in safety parades. Boorish clowns marked as jaywalkers drew laughter; in a New York City parade, a clown was repeatedly rear-ended by a slow-moving Model T, to the amusement of crowds.

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*Mountain Bike Magazine
May 1998*

In 1923, the stakes went much higher. In Cincinnati, where voters could put initiatives on the ballot in city elections, 42,000 people signed a petition for a city ordinance that would compel drivers to install a mechanical speed governor that would limit cars to 25 mph. Speed governor rules had been proposed before, and seemed to many a far more effective cure for speeding than ordinary speed limits. Nowhere else, however, did such a proposal get so far as in Cincinnati. Local automotive interest groups were alarmed; speed governors threatened to negate the car's chief advantage. To fight the initiative they organized as never before, and recruited the help of the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce (NACC), the industry's leading trade association. Together, through a massive publicity effort, they fought—and crushed—the vote-yes campaign.

The initiative was a turning point. Automobile advocates had been a diffuse constellation of local organizations. In 1923 and 1924, responding to threats to their image, to restrictive regulations and to the Cincinnati speed governor initiative, they organized nationally, cooperating in a common effort. Sometimes calling themselves “motordom,” they worked together to advance their causes—including the redefinition of streets as places where cars belong, and where pedestrians bear responsibility for their own safety.

According to NACC's George M. Graham, an auto manufacturer, the lesson of Cincinnati was that “pedestrians must be educated to know that automobiles have rights.” To spread the word, motordom launched innovative new projects. Recognizing one of its biggest obstacles as newspapers, which routinely blamed motorists for pedestrian traffic casualties, NACC offered a service to them. NACC gave editors blank forms on which to fill in details about each traffic accident. Newspapers sent the completed forms to NACC, which drew its own conclusions from them. NACC sent its reports back to the newspapers, which presented them as authoritative. By so doing, NACC's plan was to “make the newspaper a clearing house” for its “safety suggestions,” and newspapers would “be influenced ... to give greater publicity to the real causes of traffic accidents.” NACC was confident it could use the “clearing house” to show that “In a majority of automobile accidents the fault is with the pedestrian rather than with the automobile driver.” Within a year, newspapers in about 300 cities and towns participated, gathering data for NACC to assemble and interpret. In the resulting reports for 1924, NACC blamed pedestrians far more often than drivers, and did not refrain from use of the controversial epithet jaywalker.

By the fall of 1924, the character of newspaper coverage of crashes had changed enough to catch the notice of people unaware of NACC's service. With some exaggeration, the magistrate of New York City's traffic court, Bruce Cobb, commented that “it is now the fashion to ascribe from 70 to 90 per cent of all accidents to jaywalking.” Newspapers' use of the term had indeed risen sharply; indeed in 1924, jaywalker entered a standard dictionary for the first time. Under the new logic of traffic safety NACC promoted, pedestrian casualties were to be solved by spreading the word: streets are for cars. Free-range pedes-

trians are jaywalkers. Nevertheless, jaywalker remained a controversial label. In motordom's tireless promotion of the word, Cobb smelled a rat. “I am not sure but that much of the blame heaped upon so-called ‘jaywalkers’ is but a smoke screen,” he said, “to hide motordom's own shortcomings, as well as to abridge the now existing legal rights of the foot travelers on our streets.”

In another national project, motordom capitalized on a local success in Los Angeles. There, the Auto Club of Southern California and its allies drafted and secured passage of a new traffic ordinance in 1924 that regulated pedestrians, in effect outlawing jaywalking. Though a similar regulation had been attempted in 1919, this time local motordom, ably led by E.B. Lefferts, got it right. Instead of insisting on enforcement, Lefferts asked that for a year police not arrest jaywalkers, but only blow a whistle at them, take (or even carry) them back to the curb, and otherwise embarrass them. “The ridicule of the fellow citizens,” Lefferts explained, “is far more effective than any other means.”

Motordom saw the Los Angeles ordinance as a model for the nation, revised it, secured the support of the U.S. Department of Commerce for it and presented it to the nation in 1927 as the “Model Municipal Traffic Ordinance.” Within a year, more than 100 cities had adopted it, and it continued to spread. Meanwhile, the American Automobile Association (AAA) launched a massive school safety education effort, giving schools across the nation free safety materials and sponsoring school safety patrols. In its safety curricula and safety patrol training, AAA's message was consistent: “the street is for autos.” Children pledged to cross streets carefully.

In American cities in the 1910s and 1920s, the automobile was not welcomed, there was no “love affair” with it, and change was not driven by consumer demand. Local automotive interest groups and national motordom had no confidence that consumer demand was sufficient to secure the car's urban future.

This history matters. It offers a rebuttal to claims that we have to accept the automobile's priority even in cities, on the grounds that it is an expression of mass preference or the product of a natural evolution. It is also a signal to those who seek change. It suggests that changes in mental infrastructure must accompany changes in physical infrastructure, and that mental infrastructure can be changed. Almost a century ago, motordom found inventive ways to change prevailing notions about the use and abuse of streets. Today, organized advocates of change can take heart from the example. If motordom could change minds about what streets are for, perhaps advocates of change can do so again. ■

Peter Norton is the author of *Fighting Traffic: The Dawn of the Motor Age in the American City* (MIT Press, 2008) and a historian of technology at the University of Virginia.

This article is adapted from other work by the author: “Street Rivals: Jaywalking and the Invention of the Motor Age Street,” *Technology and Culture* 48 (April 2007), 331-359; *Fighting Traffic: The Dawn of the Motor Age in the American City* (MIT Press, 2008); and “Of Love Affairs and Other Stories,” for inclusion in *(In)complete Streets*, edited by Steve Zavestoski and Julian Agyeman (Routledge, forthcoming). Documentation is excluded here for readability; full documentation is provided in the three works referenced above.

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Daniel Flanzig is the co-author of "Wheels of Justice" a monthly column for the New York Bicycle Coalition and is a frequent lecturer on bicycle litigation in New York. He has also developed NY's first Free Bike Crash App, a useful tool to help cyclists collect critical data after a crash. To learn more visit www.newyorkbikelawyers.com or call for a free consultation.

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* As reported in the NY Jury Verdict Search Reporter 2010

SAFE STREETS

Getting to Zero, One Step at a Time

VISION ZERO—THE IDEA THAT NO ONE should be killed or seriously injured in traffic—came into being 16 years ago in Sweden as a radical safety philosophy and made its way to New York City by way of Transportation Alternatives' tireless advocacy. Now, with the backing of Mayor Bill de Blasio, Vision Zero has moved from the realm of international best practice to a citywide priority. But that doesn't mean the fight is over.

Despite the Mayor's impressive plan to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries to zero, a number of obstacles stand in the way of safer streets. None are insurmountable, but they'll all take more than lip service to overcome. Here's how Transportation Alternatives' top talent is ensuring that a once-radical idea becomes a life-saving reality that will benefit every New Yorker.

Find the Money

Although low-cost engineering solutions like painted bike lanes and reclaimed street space have helped save lives, drastically reducing traffic violence won't be free. Training police officers, hiring urban planners, executing traffic studies and putting more on the plate of already-taxed City agencies will require significant investment. Administration officials have put the figure in the tens of millions. Much of that will be covered by internal cost-cutting measures, but somewhere along the line the Mayor will have to make room in the executive budget for Vision Zero.

Albany's Influence

Mayor de Blasio can do a lot, but big chunks of his plan to tame New York City's streets will be decided 150 miles north of the Big Apple in Albany. If that wasn't tricky enough, Hizzoner's plan for universal pre-kindergarten and a minimum wage increase are already putting pressure on the Governor and State Legislature. Adding automated enforcement cameras, stronger penalties for driving with a suspended license and a lower speed limit to the list won't make anything easier.

What Constitutes Consensus?

There's a lot in the Mayor's plan that's wildly popular, but there are also items that—in the interest of saving lives—are going to ruffle some feathers. Whether it's lower speed limits, street redesigns, ticket blitzes, new rules for taxis or a handful of other proposals in the plan, the Mayor is going to have to decide what kind of consensus constitutes real community input. A robust public process is unquestionably the right way forward, but if anyone at City Hall is expecting unanimity, we've got a bridge to sell them.

Cooperation Is Complicated

There's no simple way to make streets safe. Education, enforcement, engineering and analysis will all be part of the picture, which means dozens of New York City agencies will have to work together to make Vision Zero a reality. The Mayor's office has said there will be a permanent Task Force in the Office of Operations, but what will that look like? Who will be accountable? How will the public know what's underway? There are almost as many questions as there are things to do.

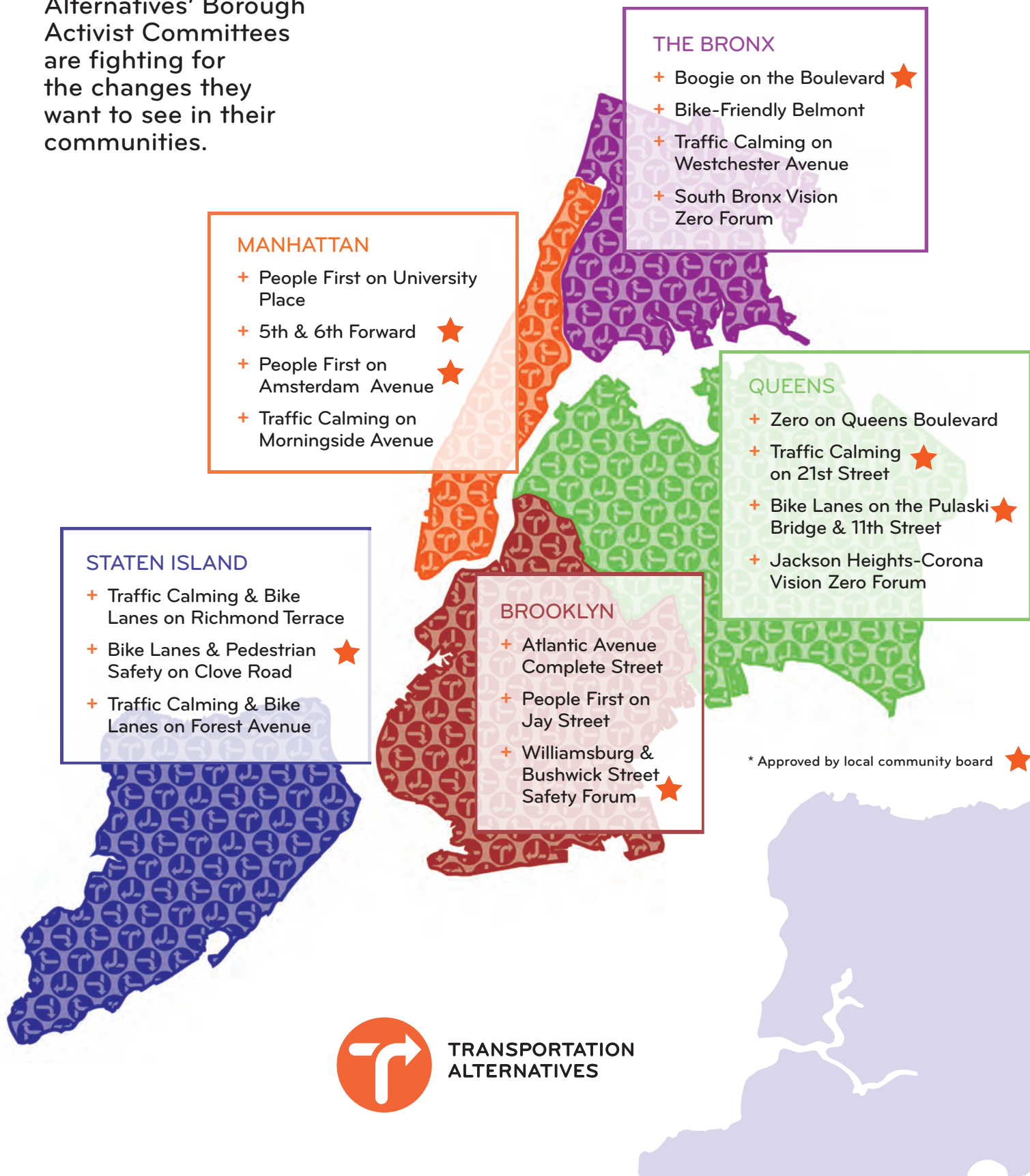
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ACTIVIST COMMITTEE UPDATES

Activist Committee Campaigns in Progress

Transportation Alternatives' Borough Activist Committees are fighting for the changes they want to see in their communities.



TRANSPORTATION
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DISPATCHES FROM THE FRONT

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES' ACTIVIST COMMITTEES HOST MONTHLY MEETINGS AND SOCIAL OUTINGS, AND SUPPORT VIBRANT ONLINE COMMUNITIES. THEY ALSO MAKE FIGHTING FOR LOCAL STREET IMPROVEMENTS A LOT OF FUN.

MANHATTAN

Petition signatures and handwritten letters keep rolling in as the Manhattan Activist Committee continues the fight for Complete Streets on 5th and 6th avenues. The numbers are now up to more than 10,000 signatures and 1,500 handwritten letters. Additionally, 42 local businesses and four civic organizations support the campaign. If all that wasn't news enough, the Committee's tireless advocacy to make Amsterdam Avenue a Complete Street yielded the unanimous passage of a resolution in favor of the plan from Community Board 7.

MEETS

WHEN: First Thursday of every month
6:30 – 8 pm
WHERE: Transportation Alternatives
127 W.26th Street, 10th Floor
(Chelsea)
CONTACT: Albert Ahronheim, Chair
aahronheim@aol.com

STATEN ISLAND

The Staten Island Activist Committee has its sights set on a redesign of Forest Avenue. In just a few short weeks, they've already found allies in local businesses and community organizations, who've signed on in support of bike lanes and pedestrian improvements on the thoroughfare. With a petitioning push planned for the big St. Patrick's Day parade, that campaign is off to an auspicious start. But that doesn't mean other projects will be left behind: Council Member Debbi Rose signed on to support their Richmond Terrace campaign, and the Community Board Join Up in December has a handful of neighborhood activists itching to get involved in local politics.

MEETS

WHEN: Third Thursday of every month
6:30 – 8 pm
WHERE: Everything Goes Book Cafe
208 Bay Street (St. George)
CONTACT: Laura Barlament, Chair
lbarlament@gmail.com

BROOKLYN

After winning unanimous approval from Community Board 1, and support from almost every elected official in the area, the Brooklyn Activist Committee's campaign for a North Brooklyn Street Safety Forum will present to Community Board 4 in March. If all goes well, be on the lookout for more Street Safety Forums around Brooklyn this spring. In political news, Council Members Cumbo, Levin and Lander are leading an effort to recruit all their colleagues to back a Complete Street makeover of Atlantic Avenue. So far, they have the support of over 50 businesses, religious leaders and organizations (which Brooklyn Activist Committee members have helped recruit). With supportive City Council members and progressive community boards clamoring for change, things are looking good for the Brooklyn Activist Committee in 2014.

MEETS

WHEN: Last Thursday of every month
7 – 8:30 pm
WHERE: Brooklyn YWCA
30 Third Avenue
First Floor Meeting Room
(Cobble Hill)
CONTACT: Dave 'Paco' Abraham, Chair
dave.paco.abraham@gmail.com

THE BRONX

The Bronx Activist Committee held a huge meeting last December to talk about community board process and getting involved in the most local level of city government. More than 50 people turned out to learn the who, what, where, why and how of advocating for change, and now they're fired up to make a difference. The Bronx Activist Committee also selected a handful of new campaigns to work on in the coming year. Highlights include: Bike-Friendly Belmont, a South Bronx Vision Zero Forum, a fight to fix Westchester Avenue and a Grand Concourse-focused effort called Boogie on the Boulevard.

MEETS

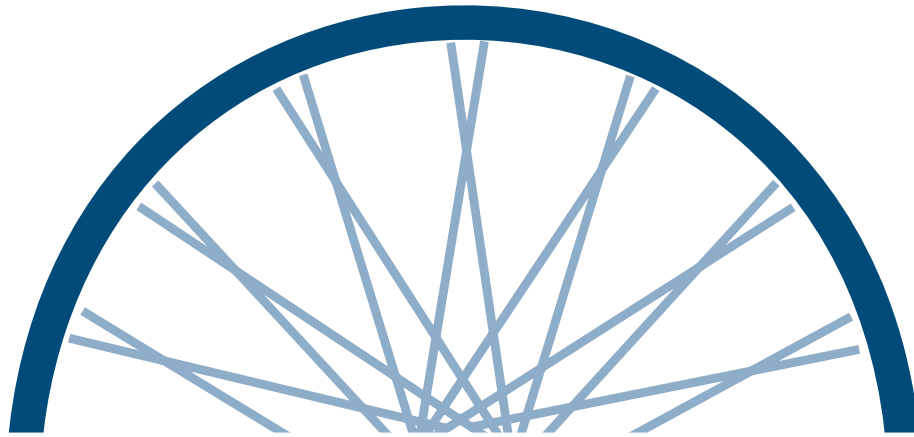
WHEN: Second Wednesday of every month
6:30 – 8 pm
WHERE: Bronx Museum of Art
1040 Grand Concourse
CONTACT: Rich Gans, Co-Chair
Elizabeth Hamby, Co-Chair
bronx@transalt.org

QUEENS

The Queens Activist Committee has assembled a powerful coalition of local stakeholders and elected officials fighting for a safer 21st Street. With the backing of Council Members Van Bramer and Constantinides, and the support of Community Board 1, they've reached out to the DOT and requested a feasibility study for traffic calming measures along the dangerous thoroughfare. Committee members have also been canvassing to build momentum for the Queens Boulevard campaign (see page 6). In 2014, the Committee plans to launch a Street Safety Forum in Jackson Heights and a campaign for a better J.J. Byrne Bridge, pushing for more protected bike infrastructure and connecting routes between Brooklyn and Queens.

MEETS

WHEN: Second Tuesday of every month
6:30 – 8 pm
WHERE: Queens Pride House
76-11 37th Avenue
(Jackson Heights)
CONTACT: Jessame Hannus, Co-Chair
belleoflonglake@gmail.com
Steve Scofield, Co-Chair
stevsco@gmail.com



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Steve Vaccaro has litigated personal injury cases for cyclists, pedestrians and others for over fifteen years. He also handles employment and civil rights disputes. Steve has served on the Advisory Council of Transportation Alternatives since its inception, as the Chair of T.A.'s East Side Committee, and as Advocacy Coordinator for the Five Borough Bicycle Club.

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SAFE STREETS

Older Advocates Are Getting Results



Andrew Hinderaker

OLDER ACTIVISTS WERE A HUGE PART OF THE FIGHT FOR A SAFER PROSPECT PARK WEST.

OLDER AMERICANS ARE BRINGING youthful energy to the fight for safer streets.

While on the national stage, advocacy titans like AARP are pushing for Complete Streets, in neighborhoods around the five boroughs, T.A. activists are partnering with senior centers, inter-generational justice groups like the Gray Panthers and anyone else who wants to make sure that local streets serve everyone equally.

“In New York City, seniors make up 12 percent of the population, but they account for 36 percent of total pedestrian fatalities every year,” said Gene Aronowitz, a 75-year-old Transportation Alternatives volunteer who teaches street safety classes at senior centers and residences around the city.

“And the number of older people is increasing,” he added. “We’ll be about 15 percent of the population of New York City by 2030, so this really needs to happen to keep these individuals safe. They’re obviously disproportionately vulnerable.”

For years, T.A. has fought for engineer-

ing improvements that can help aging New Yorkers stay active and safe, such as extending pedestrian crossing times at crosswalks to accommodate slower walking speeds, constructing pedestrian safety islands, widening curbs and medians, narrowing roadways and installing new stop controls and signals.

After T.A. advocated for the targeted application of these enhancements in communities with a high population of older residents, the City adopted a program called Safe Streets for Seniors in 2008. Since its inception, pedestrian fatalities have decreased 19 percent city-wide, from 58 senior fatalities in 2008 to 48 in 2012. Of course, there’s clearly more to do. That’s one of the reasons T.A. has broadened its efforts to include more education.

“Walkable, livable neighborhoods help seniors live independent, happy lives,” said T.A.’s Manhattan Organizer Thomas DeVito. “When older people feel unsafe on our streets, when walking to the supermarket or a park causes anxiety or strain, that is a major quality-of-life issue for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers.

There is a moral imperative to make our communities safer for our most vulnerable neighbors. Street redesigns are necessary, longer crossing times are key, and education programs provide seniors resources to keep themselves safe.”

Aronowitz has taught about 15 street safety classes so far, mostly at centers and residences in Manhattan and Queens. He advises participants not to cross the street immediately upon arriving at an intersection with a walk signal, as there’s no way to know how long the signal has been on. It is smarter, he says, to wait until the light cycles to the next walk phase. He also cautions participants about bicyclists, cars that make U-turns or drive in reverse and other common situations that could turn deadly.

When asked what he would perceive as a victory, he said, “A win would be that we save lives. And on the other side, that we turn more people on to making streets safer. I think that would be a win as well. To get older people on our side is powerful medicine. But I’m not minimizing street safety classes, I think we can really help people live better lives.” ■



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SAFE STREETS

Three Laws That Will Save Lives

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES' FIGHT FOR BETTER BIKING AND WALKING ALWAYS STARTS and ends on New York City's streets, but sometimes the work requires passing legislation through City Hall or up at the State Capital in Albany. Last year, T.A. advocates had a banner year, helping to pass groundbreaking speed camera legislation, a hit-and-run reporting bill and a law requiring regular updates to the City's street design manual, as well as a handful of other long overdue street-safety reforms. Next year, there'll be even more on the docket. With a new mayor, a fresh City Council and a game-changing initiative like Vision Zero underway, 2014 is shaping up to be filled with serious legislative maneuvering. Here are a few of the fights we're already working on:

1. Speed Cameras, Again

Last year, T.A. helped win the installation of 20 speed cameras positioned in school zones around the city, which is a good start, but it's not nearly enough, especially since our neighbors in Nassau County are fighting for 56 speed cameras, and the good folks in Suffolk County are pushing for 65. If the State Legislature sees fit to allow our friends on Long Island to implement larger numbers of this life-saving technology, then surely we deserve a few more here, right? T.A. laid some serious groundwork last year, the cameras already in action haven't met with any serious opposition, and the coalition—from Mayor de Blasio to Families for Safe Streets—is more fired-up than ever before.

2. The 20 mph City

As odd as it may seem, the speed limit for New York City's streets is set in Albany, and most state legislators are under the impression that 30 mph is slow enough. The thing is, a car traveling at 30 mph that hits a pedestrian is nine times more likely to kill them than a car traveling at 20 mph. That's a huge difference. And given that New York City is far more pedestrian dense than anywhere else in the state, it's a difference that can save a lot of lives. The Mayor's Office is currently working to reduce the speed limit to 25 mph by modifying a section of State Vehicle and Traffic Law, while T.A., a coalition of victims' families and committed state legislators are pushing for a more expansive piece of legislation that would set the default speed limit at 20 mph.

3. Getting Serious About Suspended Licenses

According to New York State statistics, about 3.5 percent of all drivers on the road are operating their vehicle with a suspended or revoked license. These same drivers are responsible for 7.6 percent of all fatal traffic crashes, making them more than twice as likely to cause a fatal crash than their law-abiding neighbors. In order to get suspended-license drivers off the road, T.A. is fighting for a law that would allow police officers and the DMV to impound license plates of repeat offenders, an approach that has had success in other jurisdictions. Bills establishing this protocol have strong support in both houses of the Legislature and advocates like T.A. and Families for Safe Streets pushing to ensure passage.

Where do you live? Astoria, Queens.

How long have you been there? Six years now. I was born and raised in eastern Queens and lived on Long Island for several years.

What do you do? I am the Assistant District Manager at Community Board 3 in Manhattan.

How did you end up working at a community board? When I was a graduate planning student at Pratt, I worked at Queens Community Board 1 as a Community Planning Fellow, and I really enjoyed it. I'm very civic-minded, and I loved being part of a truly local government, so when I graduated, I jumped at the chance to work at a community board full time.

How did you get involved with T.A.?

In 2007, when Mayor Bloomberg really pushed Congestion Pricing, I worked for Vision Long Island, which fights sprawl and promotes smart growth on Long Island. At a Congestion Pricing rally in Albany, I met T.A. staff and volunteers and was really impressed. When my husband and I moved back to the city in 2008, I joined T.A.

When did you start volunteering?

Basically as soon as I joined.

What were your first tasks as a volunteer?

I got involved in the local campaigns that impacted my neighborhood. The one I really remember was a push to improve the Columbus Triangle near the Astoria Boulevard subway stop. We surveyed pedestrian movements and went to elected officials' offices. Eventually, that redesign came to fruition with the help of our work.

What else have you done with T.A.?

The second memorable thing I did was convincing my husband to get involved. He eventually became a committee chair. Besides that, I've done lots of community outreach. I love tabling. I like going to all the different events and talking to people about their streets. At one point, I earned the title "Social Czar."



JULIANA ROBERTS DUBOVSKY HAS BEEN A T.A. MEMBER SINCE 2008.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Juliana Roberts Dubovsky

Andrew Hinderaker

Have you met fun people? Oh gosh, absolutely. I think that's one of my favorite things about being a T.A. member. I've met so many great people. Just on my block, there are a handful of members and my neighbor is the committee's other co-chair. Through T.A. I've met all sorts of amazing people of all ages and backgrounds. I've made incredible friends over the years.

What campaign are you most proud of?

I'm most proud of the work I've done with T.A. recently as part of the 21st Street Traffic Calming Campaign. I did a lot of coalition building and grassroots organizing as campaign coordinator and worked with an incredible team of volunteers. I worked to build a strong relationship with the local community board, to let them know that T.A.'s volunteers weren't outsiders to the neighborhood, but residents who really cared. Now they want us to come to meetings, give our perspective and weigh in on critical issues. That's a huge achievement.

As a community board professional, what advice do you have to give T.A. staffers and volunteers?

I think building relationships with community boards is key. Organizing is all about people. And despite how it may sometimes seem, T.A. people and community board people actually share a lot of priorities. They both care deeply about their communities. It's important to remember that when working to find consensus. Part of the job we have as volunteers is to make sure that the community board understands how invested we are in the neighborhood, that we're all community stakeholders.

Moving forward, I think data and technology are going to really help on this front. Numbers, especially numbers having to do with street safety, are really compelling, especially to some community boards where the livable streets ideology doesn't resonate in the same way. I'm hopeful that the de Blasio Administration will make it easier for advocates to make their case for safer streets by continuing to provide, and improve on, data that supports smart changes. ■

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